

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

WHEN the next translation of the Bible is made something will have to be done about italics. What is the use of italics in translations? In the Authorized Version, and in the Revised, they are used for English words which have no equivalent in the original. The italics came in with the Geneva New Testament of 1557. But as early as 1534 Sebastian Munster, in his Old Testament in Latin, uses a different size of type for the same purpose.

Is it necessary in a translation to mark words which have no equivalent in the original? The most recent translators do not seem to think so. Three translations of the New Testament into English have recently been made, and not one of them uses italics for this purpose. Mr. Ferrar Fenton, in his *Bible in Modern English*, uses no italics at all, except where he has something to say himself. In Weymouth's *New Testament in Modern Speech* there is the rare occurrence of an italic word. But it is not a word which has no equivalent in the Hebrew or the Greek. When Weymouth uses italic words he uses them for emphasis, 'in accordance with modern English custom.' In *The Twentieth Century New Testament* italics are found in great abundance. But they are not used for the purpose for which they were introduced by the Geneva Version. The only purpose for which they are used is to indicate quotations from the Old Testament.

The question then arises, If italics are to be used in the next translation of the Bible, for what purpose should they be used? *The Twentieth Century New Testament* employs them to mark quotations from the Old Testament. And it is undoubtedly important to have quotations indicated, if there were some simple and unostentatious way of doing it. But the italic type is too conspicuous for the purpose. In *The Twentieth Century New Testament* the effect of it is sometimes almost ludicrous. This is how the first and third verses of the Magnificat appear:—

Mary's Song. Then Mary said—

My soul extols the Lord,

My spirit exults in God my Saviour;

For he has remembered his servant in her lowliness;

And from this hour all ages will count me happy!

Great are the deeds of his arm;

He confounds the headstrong with their own device,

He dethrones princes, and exalts the lowly;

The hungry he loads with gifts, and the rich he sends
empty-handed away.

The translators themselves must have seen that this was not satisfactory. In the second edition, which has just been published, they have discarded italics entirely.

Weymouth uses italics for emphasis. That is the modern use. And there is much to be said in favour of it.

There is first of all the fact, that it *is* the almost universal modern use. When we see an italic word on a page we take it to be an emphatic word. But in the Authorized and Revised Versions it is all the other way. The words in italics are thrown in merely to fill out the sense or satisfy the English idiom. On a strict theory of verbal inspiration they would have difficulty in justifying their existence at all.

And there is this other fact, that in the Bible, as elsewhere, it is sometimes necessary to make a word emphatic to the eye. It is true that a good writer does not require to use italics for emphasis. He marks his emphasis by the arrangement of his words. But in a translation this perfection of style is scarcely possible. In the translation of Scripture, where the demand is made for almost verbal accuracy, it is altogether impossible. It may be true that the Authorized Version comes as near to idiomatic perfection as translation has ever come. But it is well known to every scholar that there are many places in which the emphasis of the original is left altogether unexpressed.

Weymouth is almost miserly in his use of italics. But in this case miserliness is a less offence than prodigality. When he uses them he uses them with effect. He translates Jn 8⁴⁶, 'Which of *you* (τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν) convicts me of sin?' and Jn 13⁶, 'Master, he said, are *you* going to wash my feet?' (σὺ μου νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας;). He translates 1 Ti 6⁶, 'And godliness *is* gain (ἔστιν δὲ πορισμὸς) when associated with contentment.' And he translates Mt 11²⁸, 'Come to me, all you toiling and burdened ones, and *I* will give you rest.'

Suppose, then, that italic type is to be retained for emphasis, what is to be done with words which have no equivalent in the original? An enormous number of such words are found in the Authorized Version. And not only words, but sometimes whole clauses are found. What is to be done with them? There is no doubt that in a great number of cases the best thing to do with them is

to print them in the ordinary roman type. That is what the Revisers have done. The Hebrew language needs no copula, while the English language does. The Revisers saw that it was quite unnecessary on every such occurrence to print the *is* or the *be* in italics. The Greek language uses the personal pronoun before the verb for emphasis; the English idiom requires it everywhere. The Revisers saw that to draw attention to it in cases of this kind, as if it were an omission in the original, was not only useless but misleading.

But now the question arises, and it is a question which has seriously to be considered, What is to be done when there is doubt as to the word to be inserted in the English? The Greek ordinarily omits the personal pronoun, the English inserts it: what if there is doubt as to which personal pronoun should be inserted? There is nothing for it but to know the grammar and consider the context. One pronoun or another must be used. The choice between them is due to interpretation.

Thus there are two kinds of English words which have no equivalent in the original. There are words which are required merely to make out the English idiom. To print such words in a separate type seems needless, if not pedantic. But there are words which involve an interpretation. Now there is one rule which the future translators of the Bible must obey though they disregard every other rule. It is that, as far as possible, their translation must be a translation and not an interpretation. And if ever they have to resort to interpretation they must frankly mark the fact.

Take an example of both kinds. In Acts 6⁹ we read: 'Then there arose certain of the synagogue which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines.' The Authorized and Revised Versions both print the words 'the synagogue,' on their second occurrence, in italics. But it is quite unnecessary. It is otherwise, however, with

1 John 3². In the Authorized Version we read: 'We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.' In the Revised Version: 'We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him.' In its margin the Revised Version offers *it* (if it shall be manifested). There is no pronoun in the Greek (ἐὰν φανερωθῆ). It is not self-evident which pronoun is intended. The choice of pronoun is an interpretation, and the reader should be able to see that it is. The question remains, How are such words to be marked?

If it is a misfortune that in the Authorized Version no distinction is made between italics that are self-evident and italics that constitute an interpretation, it is a greater misfortune that the interpretation is sometimes a misinterpretation. In the current number of the *Journal of Theological Studies* the Rev. Blomfield Jackson draws attention to a passage in which there is a free use of italics in the Authorized Version and in the Revised Version also. The italics are meant to give an interpretation of the passage. Mr. Jackson believes that they give a serious misinterpretation.

The passage is Mt 20²⁸, with its parallel Mk 10⁴⁰. In St. Matthew the words are: 'to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.' Thus the Authorized Version. The Revised Version puts the second *my* (needlessly and inconsistently) into italics; and it turns *it shall be given to them* into *it is for them*, retaining the italics. In St. Mark's Gospel the only difference is in the omission of the words 'of my Father,' these words not being found in the Greek there.

Do these translations convey the sense of the original? Mr. Jackson asks the question. He answers that they do not. The words in italics are needless. He admits that the English is clumsy without them: 'to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom

it is prepared.' He would relieve the English, however, by drawing out the force of the relative, making it contain the antecedent, as the construction requires. He would then read: 'to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared'; and the English is not clumsy at all. It is only necessary to notice that the 'but' now means except.

Mr. Jackson's translation is the translation of Tindale and of the Bishops. Why did the Revisers reject it? The inserted words came in with the Geneva Version. They alter the sense. They make Christ set limits to His authority, limits which are set nowhere else. They introduce a new doctrine on the doubtful interpretation of a single passage. Why did the Revisers follow the Geneva and Authorized Versions and venture upon ground so surrounded with suspicion? It was because they did not believe that the Greek word translated 'but' (ἀλλά) has ever the meaning of except.

But Mr. Jackson shows that the Revisers were mistaken. So far from the word for 'but' here never meaning except, that use, he says, is found in every age of Greek literature. He quotes Homer (*Odyssey*, xxi. 70), Sophocles (*O.T.* 1331), Aristophanes (*Eth. Nic.* x. 5. 10), and last, but not least, St. Mark. The quotation from St. Mark is this: 'And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only (ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον) with themselves.'

The quotation has just been made of a part of the Magnificat, and in the quotation the Magnificat is described as 'Mary's Song.' Is it quite certain that the Magnificat is Mary's Song? It is not quite certain now. Surveying the evidence very carefully in a book which has just been published, Mr. F. C. Burkitt comes to the conclusion that the Magnificat belongs to Elisabeth.

The book is the *Life and Works of Niceta of*

Remesiana (Cambridge Press, 1905; 9s. net). The author of the book is Dr. A. E. Burn. But Mr. Burkitt contributes a Note on the Biblical Text used by Niceta, and it is in that note that he discusses the authorship of the Magnificat.

Niceta, Bishop of Remesiana, is himself a discovery of our day. Never a prominent personality, he became confounded at last with Nicetas, Bishop of Aquileia, and his name and all his works were lost to him. Dr. Burn does not claim to be the discoverer of Niceta. He gives that honour to Dom Morin, of the Abbey of Maredsous, in Belgium. But it is impossible to read Dr. Burn's fine scholarly introduction without seeing that his share of the honour is greater than he represents it to be. Now the discovery of Niceta is a real discovery. For Niceta was the author of the *Te Deum*.

This is the story. Niceta's life covers the period of the final struggle with Arianism, and extends to the beginning of the fifth century. It is, says Dr. Burn, one of the saddest periods of which any record has been preserved in literature. The Roman Empire was breaking up. The Goths were becoming servants of the Empire in thousands. They were soon to be its masters. And the Goths were Arians. The triumph of Arianism seemed certain and imminent. Yet Arianism did not triumph. When the day came that an Arian Gothic conqueror sat on the throne of the Cæsars, Arianism was a lost cause. Dr. Burn says it is one of the strange surprises of history.

Why did Arianism become a lost cause? No doubt because it was not the truth. No doubt because Jesus *was* the Son of God. Now, of the men who opposed Arianism, Niceta was one. But his special call was not to defend the doctrine of the Godhead of the Son. The new time had brought new questions with it. Niceta's special anxiety was to defend the doctrine of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.

But in the Middle Ages the name of Niceta was

almost forgotten. It was commemorated in some Martyrologies on the 22nd of June. In one ancient Order of Catechizing he was numbered among the Doctors of the Church. But his works lay scattered in many MSS, and no scholar of the Renaissance found any clue to interest him in a writer whose reputation had vanished. Then came the 16th century and the question of revising the Roman Martyrology. Cardinal Baronius was puzzled with Niceta, whose name and place were variously spelt. He decided to identify him with Nicetas, Bishop of Aquileia, the correspondent of Leo the Great. The name and fame of Niceta were ready to be blotted out forever.

There were protests. At last Dom Morin wrote an article in the *Benedictine Review* for February 1894. He reviewed the whole problem. He held that Nicetas of Aquileia and Niceta of Remesiana were wholly distinct. He claimed that Niceta was the author of certain treatises on dogmatic theology, of certain tracts on Vigils and Psalmody, and of the *Te Deum*. His claim to the theology has been disputed by Kattenbusch. In this volume Dr. Burn seems to put the claim beyond dispute. His right to the *Te Deum* is admitted by everybody.

Now, in his treatise *de Psalmodia Bono* Niceta ascribes the Magnificat to Elisabeth. It is also ascribed to Elisabeth in the important Old Latin MSS entitled *Vercellensis*, *Veronensis*, and *Rehdigeranus*, as well as in Irenæus 235; and the reading was known to Origen although not accepted by him. Niceta seems to know no other reading. Is the traditional text wrong then? Mr. Burkitt, as we have said, believes that it is. He believes that we should read, 'And Elisabeth said (not "And Mary said"), My soul doth magnify the Lord.' He thinks that Niceta's authority should remove our objections to the unfamiliar reading.

Mr. Burkitt believes that in the original text there was no name at all. Then when scribes began to insert a name, many of them ascribed the hymn to Mary, because Lk 1⁴⁸, 'For he hath regarded the

low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed,' seemed so appropriate to the mother of our Lord. But others, 'with greater literary tact,' says Mr. Burkitt, perceived that the pronoun in verse 56 ('Mary remained with *her*') must refer to the person who utters the hymn, and that person must therefore be Elisabeth. The Syriac Versions do not ascribe the Magnificat to Elisabeth. But they saw the difficulty of this verse, and instead of reading, 'Mary remained with her,' they read, 'now Mary remained with Elisabeth.' The Greek, however, retains 'the tell-tale *her*'; and that word is sufficient for Mr. Burkitt. Nor can he help regarding this New Testament parallel to Hannah's Song as more appropriate in the mouth of the matron Elisabeth than in that of the Virgin Mary.

Dr. Burn is not altogether satisfied with Mr. Burkitt. Immediately after Mr. Burkitt's contribution there follows a note by the Bishop of Salisbury, 'On the Ascription of the Magnificat to S. Elizabeth.' (He spells the name with *z* against the usage of both our English Versions.) The Bishop of Salisbury agrees with Mr. Burkitt in the belief that there was no name in the original reading. This, he shows, is in accordance with the Old Testament style of parts of these early chapters. But he has no hesitation in saying that the scribes who inserted 'Mary' were guided to the better judgment. The context shows that Elisabeth has asked a question. Her question is, 'And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?' Mary's answer is the Magnificat.

But surely if the answer to the question is given by another, that other person's name must be mentioned. Dr. Wordsworth holds that it need not be mentioned. Quoting from the Old Testament, he shows that the Hebrew idiom did not require the mention of the name, and did not usually make it. St. Luke's style here is Hebraic. In his second chapter our Lord's mother puts the question, 'Child, why didst thou thus deal with us?' The answer is introduced by 'And he said

unto them.' The name of Jesus is not necessary. The pronoun is enough.

Dr. Wordsworth sees the difficulty of the 56th verse. He sees that if Mary has been speaking it is at least unusual to add 'and Mary abode with her.' But he thinks the introduction of the name is due to the fact that this verse is cut off from the verse in which the name is previously given or understood by the whole length of the Magnificat. Here also, however, it is at least possible, he thinks, that the original reading was, 'And she abode with Elizabeth.'

And Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' Where was she when she said it? The Gospel says, 'And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth.' What was the name of this city of Judah, and where was it?

There is an article in answer in the *Quarterly Statement* for January of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The article has been written by the late Dr. Conrad Schick. The common opinion is that this city of Judah was Jutah or Juttah. Reland, 'the pioneer of the modern geography of the Holy Land,' started it. Robinson, 'the hero of later geographical study,' established it. But Dr. Conrad Schick does not believe in it, and he gives good reason for his unbelief.

Why did Reland and Robinson think it was Juttah? First, because Juttah *was* a place in the hill country; it is mentioned in Jos 15⁵⁵. Next, because they understood that 'a city of Judah' should properly be translated 'a city Judah.' And finally, because they supposed that the *t* or *tt* of Juttah had in the course of time got softened into a *d*, and the name of the city Juttah had come to be pronounced Judah.

Dr. Schick does not deny that Juttah was a

place in the hill country. He does not deny that the proper translation of 'into a city of Judah' (εἰς πόλιν ἰούδα Τί, W.H.) may be 'into a city Judah.' But he does firmly deny that the *t* of Juttah became changed into a *d*, for the simple reason that the *t* remains in Juttah still. And he has other arguments.

Zacharias was a priest, and dwelt in a priests' city. But after the Captivity Juttah was never a priestly city. It was peopled by the Idumæans. In the time of the Maccabees, Hyrcanus conquered Idumæa, and forced the Idumæans either to be circumcised or to leave the country. But where could they go? They yielded to necessity. They became Jews outwardly, but inwardly they hated the Jews more than ever. In Juttah of the Idumæans Jewish priests would scarcely find life tolerable.

There is another argument against Juttah. It was too far from Jerusalem. That the greater part of the priests were settled close to Jerusalem is clear to Dr. Schick from Neh 12²⁷, where it is said, 'And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness.'

Where is this city of Judah, then? Dr. Schick argues that it must have been at Ain Karim. It was here that tradition fixed the birthplace of John the Baptist at the beginning, and Dr. Schick believes that tradition has all along been right. Near Ain Karim there is a church and convent, dating back before crusading times; and about ten minutes distance on the hillside, beyond the ravine with its copious spring, there is a remarkable ruin, which bears the name of Mar Zacharias. Ain Karim is a village only an hour and a half west of Jerusalem.

Professor Budde of Marburg was invited to deliver an address on the Old Testament at the

Congress of Arts and Science in St. Louis, in September 1904, but the moment he began his address half of the audience left the room. Professor Budde is known as a steady, perhaps slightly conservative, theologian, who has made a special study of the poetical parts of the Old Testament; and the audience was neither shocked at his progressiveness nor disgusted with his traditionalism. They left the room because they did not know German.

But Professor Budde believes that he has a message for those men and women of St. Louis. He has got his address translated into English, and he has asked the editor of the *American Journal of Theology* to allow him to publish it. The address appears in the January number of that quarterly. Its title is 'On the Relations of Old Testament Science to the allied Departments and to Science in General.'

Professor Budde chose that long but explicit title for his address because of an event which happened to him the last time he was in America. The last time he was in America was in 1898. He was invited on that occasion to come and deliver the American Lectures on the History of Religions. He delivered that course of lectures which was afterwards published under the title of *The Religion of Israel to the Exile*. Just when he had finished the first lecture on that course, 'at one of your oldest and most important universities' (we are not sure which he means, as the lectures seem to have been delivered at Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia), an American professor in some department of physical science came up to him, greeted him most kindly, and said, 'Why, you really use the same methods as we!'

Professor Budde was gratified with the greeting. He expressed to the representative of the exact sciences his sincere pleasure that the affinity between them had been felt so directly. He says that he found in it 'additional ground for the hope

that I was on the right road with my deductions.' And now, returning to America to deliver an address on the Old Testament, he recalls that 'winged word of six years ago,' regards it as a prophecy of their present meeting, and hopes to be able to show his St. Louis audience that Old Testament scholars do 'really use the same methods as we.'

From Professor Budde we do not look for revolution. But this is a startling article.

For what purpose, he begins, is the Old Testament studied? For its own sake? For the interest it possesses, the information it gives us? For the emotional value of its poetical, or the political value of its prophetic, literature? For none of those things. The Old Testament is studied because of its place in the history of redemption. There is a purpose in the study of it, a utilitarian purpose, what we are now accustomed to call an apologetic purpose (though the word is both foolish and offensive). The purpose is to make clear how the religion of the New Testament, the Christian religion, could spring up on the ground of the Old Testament religion, how indeed it could spring up on no other ground. In other words, the Old Testament is studied in order to show how God through Israel prepared His human children for the coming of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Is Old Testament Theology a science then? Yes. It is not a theoretical science like Pure Mathematics. But it is an applied science like Law or Medicine. Whatever purpose is served by Christianity, the same purpose is served by Old Testament Theology. And every student of the Old Testament, that his study may be truly scientific, must seek to serve this purpose. That is to say, he must recognize in this science as in every other a connexion and continuity. If the conviction should arise within him that Judaism and *not* Christianity is the fulfilment of the Old Testament, then he must draw from that conviction

its inevitable conclusions. But if he believes that the direct line of development is from the Old Testament into the New, he will understand that the study of Old Testament theology is to serve the needs of the Church of Christ.

Now, the connexion of the Old Testament with the Church of Christ has a history. The student of the Old Testament has to consider first of all whether there is not an offence in the very name. The 'Old' Testament: that means more than the earlier Testament. It may mean as much as the outgrown Testament. In accepting the name the Old Testament student feels that he is accepting a humbler position than the student of the New Testament. Nor is he even sure that the Christian Church gives him credit for his humility. And yet he knows that this humbler position was not always his.

When the Church came into existence the Old Testament, that is to say, the collection of books of the synagogue, was her Holy Scripture; and she simply added to this the Person of Jesus Christ as its incarnate fulfilment and consummation. The very proof that He was Saviour was found in the Old Testament, resting upon evidences which were believed to be visible in every page of it. Nor was the Old Testament dethroned from this eminence when a New Testament came into existence. It was still inspired of God; it was still God's Word; and as God's Word each of its words still remained true and authoritative. The Old Testament remained true and authoritative, not for the past only, but also for the present. For Christ had built upon Old Testament ground, and instead of substituting new materials, had let much of it remain. Moreover, if Christianity was to include an authoritative conception of the universe (and, fronted by Greek Philosophy, Christianity made that claim) the Old Testament was required. For otherwise long periods of its system would have been lost, and especially its teaching on the creation of the world, on the primeval state of man, and on the origin

and nature of sin. So the Old Testament held its place and authority in the Christian Church, in the Church of the Reformation not less than before, down even to the most modern times.

But it holds that place no longer. In the face of the searching investigations of our day the Old Testament has lost its value as an apologetic for Christ and as an authority on Christian Ethics. Of its Messianic Prophecies many have fallen entirely, and the rest have received a new interpretation, an interpretation that has only relative significance. Its history of origins, the origin of the world, of man, of sin, of language, is found to be not history but theory. Such theories do not belong to the science of Old Testament Theology; they belong to Metaphysics, or to the physical and sociological sciences. The Gospel has become independent of the Old Testament, completely independent, says Professor Budde, and the Person of Jesus Christ is the essence of our religion.

What is to be done with the Old Testament now? Cast it aside, says one party; cast it completely and entirely aside. And it is 'a party not to be overlooked.' Nay, 'within the theological faculties themselves, doubts now and then arose as to whether the Old Testament should be permitted to retain its position of equality with other departments of the theological course.' But we know that that is not Professor Budde's mind. Nor has he any fear that such views will prevail. He uses the past tense. He says doubts *arose*. As the twentieth century approached there came a revolution 'for which we living Old Testament men had for some decades been energetically preparing.' Lost to it on one side, the Old Testament has been restored to Christianity on another. If it is no longer a quarry of proof texts, it takes its place, with more profit and more permanence, in the development of religion in the world.

In the development of religion in the world—some would say in the science of the history of

religion. But Professor Budde does not like the name. It is not a matter of the history of religion but of the comparative study of religion. This study aims at a physiology of religion, or rather, for there is life in it, at a biology of religion.

For there is in the world a science of religion. It is a department of its own, and it is an exceptionally large one. It is a science of life, of pulsating life within the realm of human existence. All its phenomena enter into the closest mutual relations. Not one of its almost innumerable manifestations can be separated and isolated from the rest. Between the very lowest and the very highest forms of religion there appear mysterious relations which warn us neither to despise nor to neglect even the most insignificant among them. It is one of the student's most frequent yet ever-surprising experiences. Does Christianity lose by being taken into this study? It cannot lose but win. 'Indeed,' says Professor Budde, 'the more we extend the range of observation and the deeper we penetrate into details, the more evident will it become that the reality of religion is incontestable and its vitality indestructible. The more numerous the inner relations running through the whole body, the more certainly will everything be traced back to the one central point, to the living God, who had fanned this spark. And we Christians joyfully accept, notwithstanding all our conscious weaknesses, the test of spirit and power to prove the fact that Christianity is, among all religious individual organisms, the highest and the most perfect, the aim and the end of the whole process.'

Now the Old Testament comes to new honour. For, however all religions are correlated and all their phenomena organically connected, Jesus Christ was certainly a Jew of the Jews. However unique and creative His power and religious efficacy, the preliminary conditions are furnished by the Old Testament. Just as the genius has his father and mother as well as the most ordinary earthling, so Jesus always and unhesitatingly re-

cognized this relation of His to the Old Testament. He made no greater claim for Himself than that He was come for its fulfilment. To destroy this relation would be ruthless enough if it were

possible. But it is not possible. And the more the Christian and theologian cares for an organic conception of his religion, the more has the Old Testament to say to him.

The Evangelion Da: Mepharreshe.

BY MRS. AGNES SMITH LEWIS, HON. PHIL. DR. (HALLE-WITTENBERG), HON. LL.D. (ST. AND.),
HON. D.D. (HEIDELBERG), CAMBRIDGE.

SYRIAC and Biblical scholars will accord a hearty welcome to the new edition of the Curetonian Gospels *plus* the text of the Gospels in the Sinai palimpsest, which has been edited by Mr. Burkitt, under the appropriate title of *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, and published by the Cambridge University Press. A new edition of Cureton has long been wanted, as I know to my cost, for in 1892-1893, after it was known to a small circle that I had discovered the sister manuscript, I was unable to buy, steal, borrow, or even see a copy of this book until the very eve of my second departure for Sinai, when Canon Cureton's own copy was kindly put into my hands by one of his daughters, who had been for two years our next-door neighbour.

The preparation of a second and critical edition was entrusted by the Syndics of the University Press to the late Professor Bensly some twenty-four years ago. Few men could have brought to the task a greater store of erudition, or a better endowment of the caution so necessary in dealing with conflicting theories as to the origin and history of the Syriac versions; and it is matter for regret that he left but little record of the labour he had bestowed upon it, so that when his mantle fell upon the shoulders of his accomplished pupil, Mr. F. Crawford Burkitt, the work had to be begun almost *de novo*. The task of editing the text cannot be a difficult one; for it had already been carefully done by its first decipherer from a manuscript whose writing is still very distinct. But the problems which surround this interesting version, and especially the question, in what relation it stands to the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, are still, even after the floods of discussion called forth by the publication of the Sinai text in 1894, almost as far as ever from solution. Mr. Burkitt has attacked them with boldness. He brings to bear on them a great amount of erudition and

patient industry, logical acumen, and a capacity for taking trouble with minute details which Cureton's text would not have given him scope enough to exercise. He has therefore done well to include in his volume the text of the Sinai palimpsest, so infinitely more difficult to decipher; and so suggestive of problems which affect the very foundations of historic Christianity.

The Sinai text has been published in two forms, the Syndics' edition, containing a transcription made from the manuscript itself by three Cambridge scholars, the late Professor Bensly, Dr. Rendel Harris, and Mr. F. Crawford Burkitt, in the spring of 1893, and a reprint of 98 pages, containing the result of my own investigation in the spring of 1895, when I re-examined the manuscript and filled up many *lacunae*, ranging in extent from single words to half pages, and even to whole ones, which, for lack of time, had been left by the first transcribers. This was partly done by the help of a reagent from which Mr. Burkitt and his coadjutors had also profited more or less during the last thirty days of their stay at the Monastery in 1893; Professor Bensly being the only one who had scruples about using it. I need not say that it was by no means the easiest part of the pages which was left to me. If Mr. Burkitt had investigated the interior portions of pages 106a, 109b, 123a, and 128b, instead of merely copying a few distinct words in the margins and elsewhere, he would not question Dr. Rendel Harris' opinion that the surface of some of the pages has been scraped with a knife (vol. ii. p. 28 note). My verdict is, 'If not with a knife, then with very rough pumice stone.' For even the letters are disjointed, and can only be recognized by their heads being sought for above the place where they ought to be, and their tails, when they have any, at a corresponding distance beneath. Mr. Burkitt is most